

Salasel Castle in Shushtar, a glimpse into ancient Persian civilization



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Shushtar, a city renowned for its remarkable hydraulic system, has earned a well-deserved place on UNESCO's World Heritage List. Among the significant landmarks in Shushtar is the esteemed Salasel Castle. Situated alongside the Karun River, Salasel Castle has its origins dating back to the Achaemenid period, spanning an impressive expanse of approximately 5.3 hectares. It encompassed various sections such as a bakery, stable, bathhouse, barracks, armory, and kitchen. While time has eroded much of its former splen-

dor, the castle continues to captivate those intrigued by Iranian culture and civilization. Undoubtedly, Salasel Castle stands out as one of the most renowned attractions in Shushtar, harking back to the ancient Achaemenid era. Once boasting numerous courtyards and distinct sections, the castle featured exceptional fortifications, splendid pavilions, and embellishments adorned with gold, enamel, and lapis lazuli. Beyond its military and strategic significance, the castle likely served as a hub for monitoring water distribution and managing the region's water resources.

Although the grandeur of the castle has diminished over time, the remaining artifacts serve as a testament to its magnificence. Recognizing its historical value, it was listed on Iran's National Heritage List in 2009, transforming it into a popular tourist destination in Khuzestan Province. Historical records indicate the castle's existence since the Achaemenid era, serving as a residence until about half a century ago. In addition to its defensive role, the castle also functioned as the control center for the Darioon River and housed the governor of Khuz-

estan. Over the years, the castle has undergone several reconstructions, with the visible ruins primarily belonging to the Qajar period.

Castle bridges

These bridges were located over the moat surrounding the castle. According to studies, the materials used in these bridges included stone, brick, sarooj, and plaster. Currently, there is no trace of these bridges. In the past, there was a moat around the castle, which probably completely surrounded the southern side of the castle, connected to the

Karun River on one side, and the Darian River on the other. In an excavation conducted in 2005, in the south of the castle, near the fortification, evidence of the existence of a moat was found in the grassland.

Fortification

The castle's fortification, which was very strong and sharp, did not follow a specific shape or order. The materials used in it were in two forms, such that, initially, its foundation was raised with sandstone and sarooj, and then it was covered with bricks. In the southern side of the castle, remnants of a castle fence

can be seen. Remains of a circular tower of the castle are also preserved at its northwest end, which has a diameter of 30.5 meters, and its surface has been leveled through later construction.

Mansion

The castle mansion, the construction of which is attributed to Ahmad Shah Qajar, was used as the ruling residence in the highest part of the castle. The castle was built on a raised platform, several steps higher than the courtyard level of the castle. Currently, only one floor of this mansion remains.

Mystical beauties of Towbiroun and Chal Kandi valleys in Khuzestan Province

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Have you ever visited a place that reminded you of a scene from a movie or a story? Are you interested in visiting a place that is full of excitement, mystery, and beauty that would leave an unforgettable mark on your heart? If so, Towbiroun Valley in Khuzestan Province is the perfect destination for you. Towbiroun Valley is located just 20 kilometers from Dezful in Khuzestan Province. Traveling to this area will be an unforgettable experience of valley exploration for nature and adventure enthusiasts who love to explore unknown places. As soon as you

reach Towbiroun, you will be amazed by its impressive beauty that will leave you in awe. The valley has a pleasant climate with a surprising cool breeze, which is hard to believe in Khuzestan Province. It took thousands of years for nature, fog, sun, and sky to come together to create such a mythical place. This valley is a result of erosion from seasonal rains in higher areas and rapid water flow in mountains and hills. During dry seasons, the valley drains underground water flows, and fresh water seeps from the walls and bottom of the valley, in some parts. Its thin walls with a high altitude reach-

ing over a hundred meters, and clusters of grape and fig trees, waterfalls, and pools have given the valley a special beauty. Despite Dezful's high temperature, which is usually above 40° Celsius, the cool breeze in this valley gives a special tranquility to guests. Sometimes the temperature in this valley drops to 25 degrees or less, enhancing the experience of visitors. Towbiroun Valley unleashes the mystical world of nature, which is full of surprises and unusual beauty. A trip to this valley will undoubtedly be one of the most memorable trips of your life. Chal Kandi Valley, situated between the northern region of

Dezful and the eastern area of Andimeshk, is another extraordinary valley that will undoubtedly leave you in awe. The harmonious interplay of the river and rocks creates a captivating spectacle. Serving as an oasis of cool, pleasant weather amidst the scorching heat of southern Iran, Chal Kandi Valley acts as the outlet for water from the Dez Dam. With its unparalleled characteristics, the locals affectionately refer to this area as Cham Sabz, meaning "Green Cham" ('cham' means green in the Lori dialect), owing to the abundance of lush vegetation and the vibrant hues of its waters. Chal Kandi stands out as one of

the lesser-explored areas along the Dez River, boasting diverse flora and fauna. While the eye-catching rocks, stones, and the gracefully flowing colored water are mesmerizing, it is important not to overlook the presence of the surrounding bushes, trees, and grasslands. Within the crystal-clear waters, various species of fish and crabs can be spotted, adding to the allure of this enchanting place. The tranquility encompassing the river, its pristine natural surroundings, and the undisturbed meadows, marshes and grasslands offer visitors a serene experience.

In the past, local inhabitants carved resting places resembling caves into the rocks, which have now become attractions in the region. These small chambers, available in various sizes, further enhance the appeal of the area. Chal Kandi Valley is renowned as one of the primary tourist destinations and recreational spots for the local community during summer, providing a refreshing escape from the intense heat of the city. Here, the conditions for swimming, boating, and fishing are ideal, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in the beauty of nature while engaging in joyful activities.



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